

CITY OF MESA

MINUTES OF THE PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD STUDY SESSION

Held in the City of Mesa Council Chamber (Lower Level)
August 17, 2010 at 7:30 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Randy Carter, Chair
Beth Coons, Vice Chair
Chell Roberts
Lisa Hudson
Brad Arnett
Suzanne Johnson

MEMBERS ABSENT

Vince DiBella (excused)

OTHERS PRESENT

John Wesley
Tom Ellsworth
Angelica Guevara
Gordon Sheffield
Lesley Davis
Wahid Alam
Debbie Archuleta
Margaret Robertson

Bridget Jones

Chairperson Carter declared a quorum present and the meeting was called to order at 7:30 a.m.

1. Review items on the agenda for the August 18, 2010 regular Planning & Zoning hearing.

The items on the August 18, 2010, agenda were discussed. No formal action was taken.

Gordon Sheffield explained that there are five outstanding issues staff has working on with the Home Builders Association of Central Arizona (HBACA). Regarding restricting the front garage to 50% of the front facade; applicable to single family districts and residential small lot districts, staff would revise the language to only include the door; he explained that with smaller lots often the only thing you see is the garage. The second issue was to limit the proposed 5' setback of the garage elevation relative to the principle front elevation of the residence. Staff proposed reducing this setback to 3' for the residential small lot districts (RSL) and keep the 5' requirement for all other lots. He stated the City of Peoria has something called a "façade articulation requirement" which applies to subdivisions with more than 25 lots. It requires submittal of a diagram that shows how the setbacks of the front facades will be setback and vary in how the facades are articulated, so as to prevent monotony in the alignment of the homes along the street. Staff would suggest that as part of the façade articulation requirement, 60% of lots have garages setback, and a maximum of 40% of the lots in a single subdivision could bring the garages forward. Regarding issue 3; in

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the present front setbacks are measured at 20' for R1-6 and R1-7. The new Zoning Code would allow a 10' encroachment for livable areas in R1-6 and R1-7 and 8' in larger single residence districts. The Home Builders Association is asking that side turn garages be allowed to come forward as well. Mr. Sheffield stated the reason for allowing the living space to come forward is partially because of setting the garage back 5', so allowing the garage to come forward into the front setback as well seems to double up on the garage setback requirement. Issue 4; The front and rear setbacks are presently set at 20' in the proposed RSL district. Staff is proposing to modify from the 20' setback, allowing a 10' front in the RSL district for livable areas and allow alley and court loaded garages to be set at 13' from the construction centerline of the alley or drive. Typically an alley is 16' wide so the half-width is 8', which then would require an additional 5' back from property line. This can vary however, depending upon the width of the alley, but sets a constant minimum turning distance for access to the garage from the alley or court. Issue 5: In the RSL district, the standard density is based on a 4500 sq. ft. lot. To be approved for a higher density, a certain number of design elements are needed. The Home Builders suggested the proposed number of 6 to 8 is too high, and after reviewing the issue, staff agreed to lower the aggregate numbers to 4 through 6, reducing the total by 2.

Chair Carter was concerned that staff would not be allowed to enforce the requirements. He thought there should be more architectural requirements. He thought Mesa needed to have a higher standard, like surrounding communities. There was some discussion regarding the requirements. Chair Carter stated the problem he has seen over the years is that staff has no teeth to enforce the Residential Guidelines; the home builders have been able to refuse to do what staff recommends. Vice-Chair Coons confirmed that the applicants don't have to do any of these requirements unless they are asking for lots below 4500 sq. ft. and the number of these they need to meet is commensurate with the density.

Mr. Sheffield stated the one other issue was the open space requirement. The Ordinance as written required the amount of open space per lot to be a minimum of 15' X 15' with a total of 400 sq. ft. per lot. The problem was with 35' wide lots or smaller, the 15' wide open space would severely limit floor plan choices. Staff came up with two choices; there would still be the 400 sq. ft. requirement per lot with more flexibility. No space would be smaller than 80 sq. ft. or 8 to 10 feet wide (depending upon minimum lot size). A second option allowed for common, open space, with a minimum area of ¼ acre and at minimum width of 75-feet.

Bridget Jones of the Home Builders of Central Arizona spoke regarding the Proposed Zoning Ordinance Update. She stated the HBACAZ has five concerns with the proposed Ordinance.

She stated garages are a major concern. She liked the 60/40 option. She thought landscaping mitigated side turn garage dominance. She was agreeable to articulation to allow flexibility. She wanted the 3' setback to be allowed on all lots not just small lots. She showed an example that she felt showed that courtyard areas reduce the appearance of garages.

She showed the Board members examples of how putting the garage back affects the floor plan of the houses. She stated that having the garage set back often requires having a bedroom in the front of the house which means you don't have "eye's on the street". Mr. Sheffield stated the floor plans she was showing would fit on a 45' wide lot. The Architect she brought stated the

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smaller the lots become the more difficult it is to get livable space up front. Mr. Sheffield stated that would be where shared driveways, courtyards or alley loaded garages would work. Mr. Wesley stated that on one of the photos the garage setback from the front elevation of the home would only need to be 3', which was not as far back as shown on the floor plan. Mr. Carter agreed it could be done. Ms. Jones then showed the Board examples of how the side turn garages could work. Ms. Jones stated the problem with not allowing a reduced setback for side turn garages pushes the entire house back. Mr. Sheffield stated the 10' did not have to be livable space, it could be a porch, or other design elements related to the livable area of the home. He stated Mesa is facing build out and a significant number of lots would be medium sized. The smaller lots were anticipated to be in-fill. Ms. Jones stated 60' wide lots are medium sized. He explained that 60' wide lots are the smallest size allowed in Mesa without a PAD, and under present zoning ordinance, smaller lots are approved based on the specific plan presented at time of adoption, sometimes referred to as a "plan based" approval. Mr. Sheffield explained that the new Code would also allow a 10' encroachment into the rear yard for a distance of half the width of the house. Chair Carter confirmed that on the west side of town; north of Main Street is typically R1-9; south of Main tends to be R1-6 and R1-7. He also confirmed that the RSL was designed for redevelopment, among other options. The thought is the allowance of livable area into front and rear yards may help people who have tried to add onto their homes but were unable to because they couldn't meet the setbacks, and they did not qualify for a variance. This may allow building additions as an option for people to remain in their neighborhoods. The new Code also increases the lot coverage from 40% to 50%. It would also allow 2-1/2 or 3 stories as long as you can stay below 30'.

Ms. Jones stated that as far as side turn garages are concerned, there are a number of cities that allow them. She stated they are a frequent option on 60' wide lots in other cities. Boardmember Coons confirmed with staff that Peoria does allow the side turn garage; however, they require façade articulation. Chair Carter stated that if what the developers were proposing was what Ms. Jones presented in her photos, there would not be an issue. He felt the problem was Mesa tended to a location in which developers built less design oriented products. Ms. Jones stated other cities let them have side turn garages. Chair Carter stated the difference was other cities had design standards that were enforced. An architect that had accompanied Ms. Jones (unidentified) stated she was concerned that Mesa was focusing on garage placement. She would rather focus on design. She stated they would rather provide a good design with emphasis on character and articulation. Chair Carter suggested adding another category with more requirements. He stated he could understand the side turn garages if they look nice. Mr. Wesley stated he wanted to see what other cities are really doing. He was still concerned with activity and eyes on the street. The architect stated the American public lives in their backyard so she didn't know how much emphasis should be put on that. Ms. Jones stated she thought the City was trying to solve a problem with this Ordinance when it should be addressed with articulation, detailing and design. Boardmember Arnett confirmed with staff that the Residential Design Guidelines were passed by resolution and are applicable usually to PAD's. Chair Carter thought Mesa deserved to have better design. Boardmember Arnett agreed the garages should be made to look less obtrusive rather than pushing it back. Ms. Jones stated that when the garage is pushed back it ends up being a bedroom up front so you are defeating the purpose of what the Police want.

Ms. Jones then spoke regarding RSL lot coverage. She stated the problem with the maximum coverage and the setbacks proposed reduced the purpose of high density. She stated the

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smaller the lots get the less coverage you can have with the setbacks as they are. One thing that helps is the alley loaded garage setback. Anything smaller than a 45' wide lot you will have an alley loaded garage. She wanted the setbacks reduced and the maximum coverage eliminated. Mr. Sheffield stated staff had agreed to the front building wall being at 10'. The front garage staff maintained at 20' for a couple reasons, so large vehicles will fit without the bumper being on the sidewalk; and in terms of the usable areas Council has been firm about 10' as a minimum for usable open, and issues relating to the building code become problematic, or the building is required to have fire rated walls. The final issue was the design elements. She stated the problem was, with small lots, garage setbacks would not have front facing garages, so that would not be an option. Variable garage entries, you would only have alley loaded garages so you can't do that one. So you have fewer options. They wanted to see more choices. Mr. Wesley asked Ms. Jones to provide a list of choices they would like to see added.

Mr. Sheffield then explained the calendar for approval.

2. Planning Director's Updates:

- a. Status of cases previously recommended by the Board:

- Z10-02 CMC Steel

- Z10-19 AZ Health Technology Park FLMS

- b. Discuss Board calendar for 2011

Chair Randy Carter wanted staff to look into allowing the Board to take a month off during the summer, preferably in July. Boardmembers Arnett and Coons agreed that would only work if there were not a lot of cases.

3. Minutes – submit any corrections, additions, deletions.

None.

The meeting adjourned at 9:11 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John Wesley, Secretary
Planning Director

***NOTE: Audiotapes of the Planning & Zoning Study Sessions are
available in the Planning Division Office for review.***